

CURRENT PATENTS GAZETTE



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CONTENTS

Section A

New Compounds- novel entities, with images of front pages adding valuable additional information

Section B

New Uses, Formulations & Methods of Treatment- developments extending and enhancing the utility of existing products, including diagnostic and analytical applications

Section C

Chemical Processes and Combinatorial Technology- inventions concerned with efficient generation of candidates for screening, and with scale-up of laboratory syntheses in support of development activity

Section D

Biotechnology- molecular biology, nucleic acids, proteins, transgenics and gene therapy

Section E

Devices and Equipment- non-chemical or mechanical based invention with relevance to the industry

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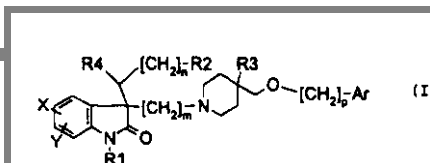
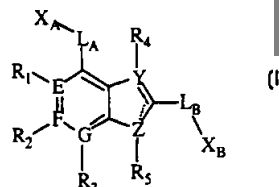
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DRUG PATENTING IN CONTEXT

Current Patents *Gazette* is the most rapid competitive intelligence service covering innovation in the pharmaceutical industry. Patent applications published during the past week have been classified and analysed, in order to place the inventions in context. For the most crucial innovations, those involving new chemical compounds, additional information is given in the form of front page images. These can be enlarged to show details of chemical structures and inventor teams, for example. Applications filed jointly, representing collaborative research, are highlighted, as are sequences of inter-related documents.

NEW THIS WEEK

This week sees applications for two new projects with Abbott claiming fused heterocyclic cell adhesion-inhibiting antiinflammatory agents.....



.....while a team of inventors at the old Synthelabo site report new oxindole based neurokinin receptor antagonists for Sanofi-Synthelabo.

HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

Several granted European patents published this week appear to be relevant to substances in development. For example, **Lilly** has been granted **EP479431B** covering intermediates to carbacephalosporins, which could include **LY-206763**. Methotrexate analogues are claimed in **EP543997B**, granted to **Chugai**, who are known to have **MX-68** in phase I for rheumatoid arthritis and psoriasis. **EP659759B**, entitled novel physiologically active substance **NK175203** has issued to **Nippon Kayaku** (originally published as **WO9405679**). The compound, used in the treatment of neurodegenerative disease, is also referred to in **WO9531992** and **WO9848029** claimed as neuron differentiation accelerators and for its use in the preparation of neuronal growth factors based on cyclopentanecarboxylic acid derivatives. **Ilo-Istituto Farm Lombardo** has been prosecuting **EP585206B** since 1993, on tryptamines for treatment of circadian rhythm disorders. This is the fourth European patent to grant in a series of five European filings relating to tryptamine analogues. **Pliva** have obtained grant of **EP659177B**, covering 4-oxo-azetid-2-sulfonic acid amides, as intermediates in β -lactam synthesis. A cyclosporin in a novel galenic formulation for oral administration is the subject of **Novartis'** recently granted **EP539319B**, based on a 1991 priority. **EP702565B**, entitled *Helicobacter pylori* catalase-based immunising composition, has been granted to **Pasteur Merieux**. As of October 1999, a potential oral vaccine against *Helicobacter pylori* was in preclinical trials as a result of collaboration between **Pasteur Merieux** and **Peptide Therapeutics**.

A couple of new projects can be found among the week's new compound cases. **Abbott Laboratories** has claims to new **cell adhesion-inhibiting antiinflammatory compounds** based on a **5,6-membered fused heterocyclic template**. Cell adhesion is a field in which Abbott has been collaborating with **Icos** since 1995, but this work has principally focussed on **viral infections** and **cancer**. The 14-strong inventor team named here seems to be drawn mainly from other areas of Abbott's discovery program. Elsewhere, **Sanofi-Synthelabo** has an application covering novel **oxindoles** that act as **neurokinin receptor antagonists**. Sanofi has studied tachykinin modulators extensively in the past, but this team at work in this case comprises inventors previously active on **adrenergic/5-HT modulators for Synthelabo**, and the agents are structurally distinctive.

The US administration is relaxing its approach to **developing countries seeking affordable medicines** during public health crises (*Nature* 402, 567; 1999). The move follows protests that Vice-President Al Gore and trade officials put pressure on South Africa to alter a 1997 law - aimed at combating its AIDS crisis - that allows the cheap manufacture or import or patented drugs (*Nature* 399, 717; 1999). The office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) will confer with the Department of Health and Human Services when a developing country complains that US trade law is making medicine unaffordable. A US official says the United States has not changed its interpretation of a key WTO agreement on trade-related intellectual property rights (TRIPs). This allows countries to manufacture or import drugs cheaply, paying only negotiated royalties to the patent holder, only in cases of "national emergency or other circumstances of extreme urgency".

The Indian government has presented a bill to parliament proposing a law giving patent protection to **new crop varieties for 15 years**, but allowing applications to be **rejected** for varieties for which the commercial exploitation "may be injurious to health" (*Nature* 402, 566; 1999). The clause allowing rejection is seen as a bid to ban both the import of **genetically modified foods** and the cultivation of **transgenic plants** where questions remain about their safety for human health or the environment. The legislation will not affect the right of farmers to save, exchange or sell produce of the protected variety, or the right of researchers to have access for research. A National Gene Fund will pass some of the sale proceeds of new varieties to the village communities that preserved the plant genetic resources.